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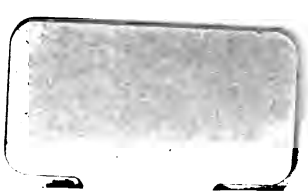

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THE
MARY CATHERINE
STORIES

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1921

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TO THE

MEMORY

OF

MARY CATHERINE LEE-GRIFFITH

THIS

LABOR OF LOVE

IS

DEDICATED

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MARY CATHERINE LEE, the original of these childhood reminiscences, possessed a wonderful memory of the events of her early childhood, which she later in life recorded in the form of these sketches.

It is the human touch in them that gives them their interest; the vivid, graphic realism of the child mind, born and reared in the shadow of the Catskills, which gave to the world the immortal Rip Van Winkle.

The greater part of these sketches originally appeared in *The Hilltop*, a weekly magazine published during the summer months at Poland Spring, Maine, becoming a most interesting feature of the children's department, without sequence.

Mary Catherine Lee was born at Conesville, New York, June 28, 1855, and died at North Raymond, Maine, June 27, 1920, within less than three hours of her sixty-fifth birthday anniversary. Her place of repose is at Dixfield, Oxford County, Maine.

In loving memory of thirty-six years of happy association, these articles have been collected, arranged, and are now published, and presented to her many friends, by

FRANK CARLOS GRIFFITH.

POLAND SPRING,
SOUTH POLAND, MAINE,
1921.

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THE
MARY CATHERINE STORIES

A STORY, a story, a story! You want a story? Very well; come here and sit in my lap and I will tell you some true stories about a really *real* little girl who was born and lived up among the great big hills that became mountains a little farther back.

Yes, she was a very little girl, only about three years old at this time, but she was always "old," it seemed; and although she began to talk very early, yet it was with a funny little "tongue-tied" way, as they call it.

Her mamma was the sweetest of women, but feeble and fragile as a piece of dainty china. The little girl's name was Mary Catherine, and she was usually called by both names rather than simply Mary, and the combination fitted the little elf to a "T."

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She had two brothers already, and now in some mysterious way another brother had appeared to her wondering eyes. How it came there, and why, and when, she did not know, but one morning, all of a sudden, there he was, and, as later in the day she remembered, she had seen the old family doctor drive away in his chaise as she was putting on her little "bu dess."

When she saw the "ozzer" brother, Mary Catherine was grieved and disappointed. She had brothers enough already, and she wanted a sister instead, one who would get to play dollies with her, and enjoy them, instead of ball, hop-scotch, and shinny.

During the day, George Allan, her next older brother, was sent to the doctor's with a message, and to bring back some medicine for poor dear mamma. It was about a mile away, over one of the big hills, and Mary Catherine was told that she might go with him; so they trudged along the dusty road together hand in hand, the two giving their views of the situation as they proceeded, which amounted to an agreement that it was "awful mean" of the doctor, when Mary Catherine needed a little sister, and nobody wanted another brother.

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When they reached the doctor's house, George Allan boldly knocked, and the dear little quaint pair waited, hand in hand, for a response. Presently a big, whiskered, kindly man, with a rugged face full of the kindliest of little wrinkles as he smiled on the tiny couple on the stone step, appeared, and invited them in.

He knew them well, for they too were "his children." Every old country doctor has twenty, forty, fifty children in the country round about that he knows as "his children."

They entered the doctor's "office" and George Allan delivered his message, and when that was done, little Mary Catherine had disappeared.

Adjoining the office, and opening off from one end, the doctor had a study, or den, of one story, with a shed roof, and in this room was collected all the curios and odd things he had ever acquired. If any neighbor had ever captured a bird with two heads, or a giant frog, a heron, a loon, or a "Lucivee," it had been stuffed and was there. A spotted coach-dog of former years stared at the same spot on the wall year in and year out. Three cats were in various favorite attitudes of cat life here and there.

A partridge, a woodchuck, a mink, and an otter

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were unafraid when any one entered, and myriads of other features of "still life" were thickly placed about the crowded apartment, including rifles, shot-guns, fishing-rods, and creels.

Without the slightest fear of any of these, our little Mary Catherine wandered, and, utterly lost to all else, she peered behind and over and under many of these articles.

Finally, when the doctor had prepared the medicine for George Allan, they both looked about for Mary Catherine. No sight or sound of her came to them, and so the doctor glanced into the den and at once beheld the little maid peering into and thrusting her little arm down into a curious vase a friend had brought him from China years before.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "Here's our little one. What are you looking for, candy or gum?"

"No, tir. I ain't 'lowed to eat tandy, and I don't tew dum," was her reply.

"Tell me, then. Perhaps I can help you," said the doctor, smiling.

Mary Catherine turned and looked up at him appealingly.

"I 'ant to find where you keep your 'ittle dirl babies, toz I 'ant a 'ittle sister, an' I tan't use no

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more boys. I dot two bruvvers already, an' I tan't play all the time wiv boys."

The doctor grabbed her up under both arms and made her head touch the ceiling, then he sat down on an old chest and placed her on his knee.

"Ain't that too bad!" he said. "If I had only known!"

"Yes, but doctor, ain't you dot no 'ittle dirl babies here, 'at George and I tan tarry home, an' George will bring back ozzer bruvver to-morrow? He ain't hurted a bit, an' he's just as good as new. Please do, doctor, toz I 'ant a 'ittle sister."

"You dear little thing, I wish I could, but I haven't got one left. I tell you, though, brothers are very fashionable now, and expensive too, and it isn't every one that can afford them. Better keep him and I will bear you in mind, and when I come across the right kind of a sister for you, then I will swap. How's that?"

Little Mary Catherine looked up, big-eyed, into the good old tender-hearted doctor's face and replied resignedly,—

"All 'ight, I s'pose we'd better keep him now, but don't you make no more mistakes, toz you know now I 'ant a 'ittle sister, I do—don't we, Geordie?"

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MARY CATHERINE has doubtless had her counterpart, but just where or when, it would be difficult to say, for the same quaint conceit which gave birth to the visionary Rip Van Winkle placed the real Mary Catherine among the echoes of the Catskills.

This tiny little miss of tender years had the early misfortune to lose her sweet and gentle mother before she could scarcely realize her worth, and she was placed in the care of an aunt, prim and correct, who lived on the summit of one great hill with an unpronounceable Dutch name, and at the foot of another equally burdened.

Then her father went off to the war raging far in the South.

Aunt was tall, thin, and stately, with the neatness and correctness of attire which indicated the Revolutionary dame of aristocratic origin, and in her training of little Mary Catherine these fixed principles of breeding were paramount.

Her idea of obedience was as fixed as the stars in the sky, and woe be to the juvenile transgressor.

One day the old white family horse was nipping

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the short grass in the dooryard, when it occurred to the venturesome little maid that a ride on old White's broad back would be a treat, and, notwithstanding the fact that her aunt had her bedecked in her "best bib and tucker" in expectation of company, the idea grew, and her brother George, who was two years older than she, was sought, and the scheme laid before him.

The two contemplated the height of the towering steed's back, which seemed insurmountable, and then too the idea that his dear sister might soil those immaculate garments appalled him for fear of the punishment she might receive, and so he mentioned his fear, which Mary Catherine swept aside with, "Tan't dirty tlothes on a white horse."

This settled the brotherly objections, and old White was edged up to the fence and after much effort the two were seated. Driving was not so easy, and White went whither he listeth, and he listeth to go where the soil was soft and boggy.

No sooner was this point in the journey reached than a loud shrill voice like a siren whistle was heard from the house, calling, "Mary! Mary!" and pretty soon, "Mary Catherine!"

As long as the call was simply "Mary," no

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trouble was feared, but when "Mary Catherine" resounded among the hills, war was imminent, and the alarmed children, failing to urge the staid old family horse, slid quickly to the ground. George struck square, with his little bare feet in the mud, but alack and alas for Mary Catherine, she fell "slantwise" and toppled over.

The pretty white "dess" was all amuck, and the neat little prunelle shoes a huge clot of mud as she presented herself soon after at the doorway.

Pity it is to tell;
The aunt took her slipper
And warmed Mary well.

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ALTHOUGH born and brought up in her youth within the shadow of the Catskills, probably the name of Van Winkle would be familiar to her merely as the name of some living inhabitant of some near-by village or farm, and none of the romance which Washington Irving threw about the mountains had as yet found lodgment in her young brain.

Mary Catherine, although not of a mischievous nature, at times did unruly things, and suffered for them by being punished. This was the result when in a wild prank of hers some playmates and herself ate an entire earthen jar of auntie's mince-meat while she was away in the village one day; but another day, when she instigated the appropriation of all her uncle's old horseshoes from the barn, to be sold in the village for pennies, the suggestion by her uncle that some tramp had been along and stolen them brought no denial of that possibility from sober little Mary Catherine.

Another day she had been patiently picking berries by the roadside, and had her two-quart

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pail full to overflowing, when a woman of the village drove along and offered to purchase her berries.

The eyes of little Mary Catherine opened wide at the prospect of becoming wealthy all at once, for she was offered the princely sum of four cents a quart for the afternoon's labor of her tired little hands.

"How many have you?" she was asked.

"Two quarts, please, ma'am," she eagerly replied, thinking of the eight whole cents.

The woman took the berries, and, turning them into a great dipper she had, said with cruel exactness, "No, little Miss Cheat, there is only a little over one quart, and there are three cents, which is more than you deserve for trying to cheat me."

The child's heart was broken, and she wept bitter tears all the way home. It was a wicked, heartless thing to do to a child, and little Mary Catherine met with the whole sympathy of her uncle, who petted her, and the somewhat veiled sympathy of the aunt, who was afraid of spoiling the child if she showed too much kindness.

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THE old-fashioned girl, so called, is about fifty per cent. a created article and the other half a natural product, for had our little Mary Catherine, of whom we have told you, been allowed to grow up in a careless and slovenly manner, one-half the charm would have been lost. As it was, she was a rose among daisies, and, although not bred to be haughty or proud, appeared to be of better quality than her few and widely scattered companions. Were any one to praise her or call her pretty, the puritanic aunt would later on remove that impression by telling her that she was not pretty at all, but only "well enough," which, while preventing a feeling of vanity, fostered one of unhappiness that she was not good-looking.

Mary Catherine was a little "tow-head," but her hair was always carefully braided, and fastened with a neat but not gaudy ribbon.

It was the uncle's annual custom to purchase from the store an empty hogshead, and on the day of the incident I am about to relate, the newly

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arrived hogshead was standing in the yard, rich with clinging and moist molasses sugar, highly attractive to the juvenile palate.

Aunt was expecting company, as often occurred, and had dressed Mary Catherine with great care, the pretty little prunelle shoes which had been carefully cleaned, new hosiery, and neat and clean dress and tier, with the mathematically correct braids of hair and freshly pressed ribbon.

Mary Catherine and her brother George, who did not receive the strict attention as to dress bestowed upon his sister, were in the yard, together with two other children of a not-far-distant neighbor, when our little lady proposed that they get some sugar from the hogshead. How to do so puzzled the minds of the others.

"Yes, we tan," persisted my lady. "Dust all det on one side an' puss, and it'll tip over."

This was put into execution, and as it lay upon its side one after another walked into its broad open entrance, my lady first.

The feast began and proceeded, all oblivious of the arrival of the expected guests, soon after which came the call from the open door of "Mary! Mary! Mary Catherine!" A reply was neces-

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sary now, and "Here I is!" resounded from the depths of the huge barrel.

"Where?"

"Here in the hogshead." And one after another the quartette emerged, Mary Catherine last but not least, and it is safe to say a sweeter child never existed than was our little heroine. Her hair, her ribbon, her dress, her shoes were each a sticky mess of dripping sweetness.

Alas again for Mary Catherine, who, sad to say, was not "presented" until she had been boiled out and received the "feeling" sympathy of the aunt, who again "warmed her well."

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THERE had been two Sevillas in the family, neither of whom lived to fulfil any of the hopes of their parents, and so when Mary Catherine was born it was considered bestowing the name of Sevilla upon her, but the aunt, as may have been already inferred, had great commanding qualities, and read the law thus:—

"You name her Sevilla and it is flying in the face of the Lord, but you name her Mary Catherine and she will live." And thus it was she received the double name, which came as a sort of second nature to the aunt to utter, having been the one to bestow it.

One day my lady had been the subject of reproof, and, notwithstanding her protestations of innocence of the offence charged, the strict discipline of the aunt required a victim, and so with the remark, "You may not have done this, but there probably have been times you have disobeyed, and you may set this down to those," she, to use her invariable expression, "warmed her well" and locked her up in the bedroom.

Smarting with the injustice of this, the young

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martyr set her little jaws firmly together, repeating to herself, "She tan't more'n kill me," and did not cry a single tear.

Uncle was away on the farm at work, and aunt went to pass the afternoon with a neighbor's wife, leaving our little lady a close prisoner.

The sting of punishment soon vanished from the recollection, and in looking about for some diversion her eyes fell upon uncle's great silver watch. This to her had little value except to provide what amusing pastime it might, and so in another minute a long string was attached to the ring and it was swung from the open window.

While engaged in this sport, along trudged two little barefooted children of their nearest neighbor up the great hill, and into the yard they came.

Mary Catherine swung the great watch to and fro, striking nearly every time, in its pendulum movement, against the house, as she sang, "I've dot a watch, I've dot a watch," and demonstrated that fact very vigorously to her admiring little friends.

Later in the day auntie returned and released the prisoner, and found the timepiece hanging by the side of the house.

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The crime was of such magnitude, the property injured not being hers, that the punishment was to be meted out by uncle this time.

Uncle came, and on being told the story laughed and said, "Come here, you witch," and took her on his knee and kissed her, saying, ""Twas only an old thing, mother, and it can be fixed all right; only a little dented, that's all."

This was why Mary Catherine loved her uncle so much,—he could find no punishments for her but forgiveness and caresses.

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Our little old-fashioned girl reared among the Catskills had many childish experiences and ailments similar, doubtless, to those of all child life in the country. Her playmates were few, and playthings still fewer, and when her little heart was set upon having a table-cloth for the rude and tiny construction which she called a table for her dollies to dine from, and which the aunt thought unnecessary, she never lost sight of her desire, and eventually secured one in a manner I will describe at another time.

The day the quaint little picture was taken which has illustrated these articles she had just recovered from a severe illness, and for fear she might not survive another, the visit to the Catskill village daguerreotyper was planned. Back combs for the hair were new there then, and two were purchased for fear of breaking one. Uncle had heard they should be warmed before using, and the process of heating snapped it into a hundred fragments. The second suffered likewise, and the picture was taken minus the comb. Rubber combs were not then in use, and the horn ones were shattered.

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Soon after this event, in '65, the war in the South ceased, and our little lady, whose father had given his life meantime in the service of his country, was left at home alone by her aunt, for some fancied or possibly real infraction of her rigid rules, while she spent the day with a neighbor's wife.

Unjust punishment did not serve to curb this little elf's independent spirit but the rather incensed it, so when other children scuffed along the dusty roadway on the way to school and invited her to go, she said she would but was not dressed to go a-visiting.

Did she know where her things were? She did. If she would get them the older girl would dress her, and so the white tier, the ribbon, the pretty white openwork little hose, and the famous prunelle shoes were produced and Mary Catherine encased in them.

The day at school was a novel and delightful experience, and the wise-appearing little visitor was given a seat of honor.

Later in the day, at home, the eagle and ever-searching eye of the grand dame fell upon the dust-laden shoes, and inquiries were set on foot.

"Where have you been, my lady?"

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"I've been to tool."

"Where?" from the aunt.

"I've been to tool," proudly from the little runaway.

"Tell me all about it, this instant," firmly demanded the aunt.

"I dot lonesome, an' Getchen Vedder dessed me, an' I been to tool all day, auntie."

A look of outraged majesty passed over the aunt's face at first, but possibly there was a gleam of humor down deep in her nature, and she soon relaxed and issued her pardon thus,—

"Well, my lady, if it wasn't that to-day peace had been declared, I should warm you well."

Hence it will be seen that the declaration of peace between the North and South was also a declaration of peace to the orphan daughter of a dead soldier.

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Little Mary Catherine had long wanted a small table, that she might give a party for her dollies, and now George Allan, with the help of the hired man, had made her one. They had taken an old stand from the attic and shortened the legs so that it was just right for our little girl and her family.

The next thing she must have was a nice piece of white cloth for the table, so she asked Aunt Elizabeth for it, but auntie did not realize how badly the dear child wanted it, and did not hurry about getting it.

Finally little Mary Catherine summoned courage to say: "Aunt Elizabeth, won't you p'ease try to find a little piece of white cloth for my dollies' table? I does want it so much!"

The reply was sharp and quick: "Mary Catherine, you say 'table-cloth' to me again and I will warm you well. When I find a white piece suitable you will get it, and not before."

Poor little girlie! She didn't see how she was to give a party for her "family" without a table-

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cloth, but she knew better than to speak of it again. However, she told George Allan all about it, who replied: "What's the use of having one, anyway? We can have just as good a time without it."

"I'm s'prised at you, brother," said the little lady; "but then, you are dust a boy, and don't know 'bout things as I do."

The next day, however, Aunt Elizabeth gave her permission to visit the little girls at the next house, and to take one of her dollies with her; so she decided upon Lady Alice, as the day was fine.

The Van Dusen girls saw little Mary Catherine coming, and came to meet her, telling her how busy their mother was, cutting out some new white dresses for them.

Mrs. Van Dusen invited the little girl in, and told her that she was then cutting out the sleeves for the children's dresses, which our little lady noted in her child mind were just the size for her table.

Mary Catherine played a while with the other children, but all the time her mind was on the little piece of white cloth, until finally, when no one was looking, the little one slyly put one piece

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in her pocket, and soon after remarked, "If you p'ease, Mrs. Van Dusen, I dess I wanter do home now," and no pressing could induce her to remain longer, so home she trudged with Lady Alice and the little piece of white cloth.

When she reached home it did not take her long to get her table and dishes, and ask auntie for some bread, butter, and cake, which were freely given her. Then she produced the little piece of white cloth and covered the table, placed the dishes and goodies, fixed seats for three of the dollies, as she would hold the twins, they being the smallest.

The next thing was to get her "family," as she called them, and seat them. She had filled the tiny cups with milk from the little teapot, seated herself on her little bench that grandpa had made, and was having just the nicest time, when she was roused from her happy childhood dream of perfect joy by the well-known voice of her auntie, calling: "Mary! Mary Catherine! You come into the house. I want you."

She carefully placed the twins upon the bench, and with a hop and a jump entered the house, to be greeted with, "Mary Catherine, where did you get that piece of white cloth?"

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Auntie's eyes were upon her, so she replied,—

"I dot it at Mrs. Van Dusen's."

"Did you ask her for it?"

Again the answer came,—

"No, ma'am."

"You tell me this minute how you came by it. I want to know."

Little Mary Catherine began to see that she had done something naughty, so with a sob the old-fashioned child said piteously,—

"Auntie, I dust wanted that cloth *so* much that when I saw it I dust tut it an' put it in my potet an' didn't say nothin' to nobody."

Aunt Elizabeth's face grew very long and very severe as she said sternly,—

"You stole that."

But the little one's voice quivered as she inquired,—

"P'ease, auntie, what is "tole'?"

Her auntie then explained to her how very wrong it is to take anything that does not belong to us, while tears ran down the child's cheeks as she said, "I won't never do so any more."

"Now," said the aunt, "we must take it back, and you must tell Mrs. Van Dusen that you stole it."

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Our unhappy little Mary Catherine sorrowfully put her dollies and toys away, remarking between her sobs as she did so, "I's in dreffful trouble, Betsy dear, an' I dot to take that table-cloth back."

Aunt Elizabeth was ready all too soon, and as they journeyed down the road together, little Mary Catherine, with tears in her eyes, looked up so beseechingly, and begged: "P'ease, auntie, has I dot to say "tole'? Tan't I say 'tut'?"

"No, you can't; and that will teach you never to steal again."

As they approached Mrs. Van Dusen's she was outside the kitchen door, churning, so the little one ran up to her and said,—

"I'm af'aid, Mrs. Van Dusen, you won't love me any more, for I was a very naughty girl when I was here before, 'cos I—I 'tole it, 'cos I wanted a table-cloth for my dollies' table, an' if you p'ease fordive me 'is time I never, *never* do so any more, *never*."

In spite of the presence of Aunt Elizabeth, Mrs. Van Dusen picked the child up and wiped her tears away, kissed her, and told auntie she must not punish her, as she had been sufficiently punished already, and then the two started on their

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return home, where on arriving they found grandpa and George Allan waiting for them.

Seeing the tears in his little pet's eyes, and on learning the cause, a grieved look came to his sweet old face as he said,—

"Elizabeth, you are too severe with the child."

But her reply was,—

"Father, I am doing my Christian duty, for does not the Bible say, 'Spare the rod and spoil the child'?"

"You are right, my daughter, but it also says that 'God is love.'" Then calling little Mary Catherine to him, he continued, "Put your hand in grandpa's pocket and see what your grandma has sent you."

She obediently put her little hand in and pulled out a small parcel, on opening which, what was her astonishment to find a dear little white table-cloth!

A happy look came to her bright little face as she said,—

"Dranpa, I didn't know 'tole was naughty, but I won't never, never do so no more, dear dranpa."

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Our little Mary Catherine was growing apace, and on this Christmas of which I write she was to hang up her stocking for the first time. Grandpa had told her a lot about Santa, and she was a very happy little girl; but when grandpa hung up both of her little stockings she inquired, "Why does you hang up both of mine, dranpa, and only one of yours and auntie's?" He told her that she had been such a good little girl that Santa would have a lot of nice things for her, so they must see that he had lots of room.

At last they put her to bed in the large wooden cradle that she had always slept in, and she was heard to remark to her one-armed Betsy, "Too bad you has no stockin's, dollie, but I does love you dust the same." Then, as she continued to be wakeful, auntie rocked her to sleep.

She awoke very early, however, the next morning, her first thought being of Santa,—if he had arrived, and if he had brought her anything. She would investigate, so she arose quietly, still holding Betsy by her one arm, and went downstairs to the big kitchen, only to be astonished to find only

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a row of empty stockings. Although she was not a crying child, the sight of all those empty stockings was too much for her and she burst into tears, saying between her sobs, "I know dranpa was good, but mebbe I wasn't *all* the time."

Bitterly sobbing, she climbed the stairs, holding up her little nightie with one hand and Betsy with the other, to whom she addressed herself.

"I dust dess Santa fordot this house, Betsy, an' when he remembers that he fordot it, he'll be sorry, I dess."

By this time grandpa had heard the little tot, and came and picked her up, taking her back to her bed, where she told her sorrows.

Grandpa comforted her, saying that Santa had a long way to come, and that there was a lot of snow this year. She must go right to sleep, and when she awoke the next time she would find that Santa had been here and filled all the stockings.

With this assurance she was comforted, and soon fell asleep, continuing so until auntie came to dress her. Of course the first question was, "Did he come, auntie dear?" the answer being, "Yes."

"And did *all* the stockin's have somefin' in?"

The fact being that all were well filled made her

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heart leap for joy when they went downstairs for prayers, which seemed unusually long this morning, and probably they were.

After this all proceeded to the kitchen to see what the stockings contained. Santa had indeed been good to all, but the little white stockings were brimming. Out of the top peeped a boy dolly and a girl dolly; then on the table was a Bible, a picture-book, and a Noah's Ark filled with animals.

The stockings were emptied of their other contents, and little Mary Catherine was indeed happy.

Grandpa gave her a dollar, which found its way into her bank, but I think the two dollies were her greatest delight, for now she had five dollies to play with: Betsy, her mamma's dolly, then Lady Alice, and now the twins, as she called them.

With her little arms full she climbed upon her grandpa's knee and nestled up to him as she said, "He did come, didn't he, dranpa?"

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ONCE our little Mary Catherine was to spend the day with the dear old lady that every one called "Aunt Nauchy," who lived with her husband, Uncle Nat Hollenbeck, away up on the top of the Colerbocker Hill, in a quaint old log house.

They both dearly loved to have the child left with them when Aunt Elizabeth went to town for the day. On these occasions little Mary Catherine always carried her poodle-dog, Don Pedro, with her, and one dolly, usually the rag one, Betsy, although sometimes, if the day was particularly fine, she would carry her mamma's Shaker dolly.

She loved to sit in a small old-fashioned rocking-chair in front of the fire and watch the logs burn, while Aunt Nauchy told the same stories over and over again.

One very cold day, Aunt Elizabeth and grandpa had to go to town on business, so George Allan was told to take sister up to Aunt Nauchy's for the day. The children went leisurely up the long

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hill, playing in the snow as they went, but finally they came to the log house and on knocking at the door were told to come in, which they did.

On opening the door they were very much astonished to find Uncle Nat standing in front of the fire, with tongs in hand, holding a horse-shoe in the blaze. Not far away was Aunt Nauchy standing by the churn, and when she took the cover off they both cautiously looked inside, apparently much frightened.

Their manner led Mary Catherine to inquire: "What's the matter wis you? What makes you look so scairt?" And George Allan also wanted to know: "What you gettin' the hoss-shoe hot for? You hain't got no hoss here to shoe?"

With one breath the old couple answered, with an air of mystery: "There's ghosts in the churn, and the butter won't come. We have churned for four mortal hours, and now we'll fix them. They always leave when you put a red-hot horse-shoe in the churn."

With some hesitation Mary Catherine came and stood by the churn, when, looking in, she said, "Dranpa says, dey ain't no dosts, and I can't see any."

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By this time the horse-shoe was red hot, and as Uncle Nat put it cautiously into the churn the children watched him with much interest, the old couple laughing heartily when the quaint child remarked,—

"Auntie, you fordot to wash dat horse-shoe, I dess."

When the horse-shoe was removed from the cream, the churning again proceeded, and, strange to say, the butter soon came, after which Aunt Nauchy made some goodies for the children, who had a nice dinner and returned home happy.

That evening Mary Catherine told grandpa about the "ghosts," and how the butter came after the horse-shoe had been put in, but grandpa said, "Pooh, pooh; the cream was too cold, and so when the hot iron was put in, that warmed it so the butter came."

The child looked up in the dear old doctor's face and said, "I knew dere wasn't any dosts, 'cos you told me so long time ago." Then she had her bread and milk and said her prayers, and as she went upstairs, George Allan, who dearly loved his little sister and was just a bit timid himself, asked Aunt Elizabeth if he might go upstairs and sit with sister so she wouldn't be

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afraid, but the cute little lady replied, "I isn't 'fraid; 'cos I'm real old now," and holding Betsy by her one remaining arm she trudged off alone, with a "Dood-night ev'ybody."

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ONCE, quite a long time ago, I told the little folks of some of the happenings to little Mary Catherine, who lived away up in the Catskill Mountains, with her auntie and grandpa. Most of the children's papas were very poor, so toys and dollies were few.

One day an old lady called on her aunt, and seeing the little girl playing with five dollies said: "My dear little girl, don't you know, I think you are a very selfish child. Here you have five dolls and a lot of toys, when there are so many poor children that have never had even one doll. Won't you spare me some of yours?"

Little Mary Catherine suddenly looked very serious, first at the lady and then at her "family," as she called them. Presently she said,—

"If you p'ease, Mrs. Vedder, I would like to wait until to-morrow; then I could fink about it, just as dranpa does when he's bothered."

Mrs. Vedder kissed her, much against the child's will, as she laughed,—

"Oh, you old-fashioned child, I never saw an-

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other like you, and as you wish, I will call to-morrow to see about it."

The following day grandpa took her on his knee and said, "Well, sweetheart, which one of your little family are you going to part with?"

The serious look came back to the child's face as she inquired,—

"P'ease, dranpa, may I give my dollar to Mrs. Vedder to buy some dollies for the poor children? I am sure no other child would love my poor Betsy as I do. You know she has lost one arm, and besides, she is just made of rags, but I love her a lot. She was my first one, and she was with me when I had measles and the hooken-cough, and she sleeps with me. I'd be so lonesome without her.

"Then there's dear mamma's Shaker dolly that she had when she was a little girl like me. Dranpa, angels don't play with dollies, do they?"

He patted her on the head and replied, "No, child."

"Well, I just got to keep her, you know. Then there is my Lady Alice, Uncle William brought me from England. She is my lady dolly, so I would miss her a lot, you know. Then Santa brought me twins, a little boy and a little girl,

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and that makes such a nice family to play with; don't you think so, dranpa dear?"

The dear old doctor just smiled one of his rare smiles and told her,—

"I think we cannot spare any of our little family, but here comes Mrs. Vedder."

And taking a bill from his pocket, he handed it to little Mary Catherine, who in turn gave it to Mrs. Vedder, with the remark,—

"P'ease buy some new dollies for the poor children, 'cause nothing but angels can carry away any of my family."

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Although little Mary Catherine was brought up on a farm in the Catskills, yet she had all the correct manners one might expect to find in a city-bred girl, and the aunt who brought her up was exceedingly exacting in respect to her dress, not allowing her to go barefooted like most little country girls, and watching with jealous care that no speck of dirt or careless tear ever went long uncared for. Correctness of speech was one of the aunt's first principles, and no error of expression went unreproved.

One day our little lady was gathering berries along the roadside some distance from the farmhouse, dressed, as was her custom, in her neat clean attire, when a smart turnout came along and she was invited to get in and ride.

"Thank you, but auntie does not allow me to ride with strange people," she answered.

"Why?"

"They might not be honest people," was her frank reply.

"Where do you live?"

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"At the top of the Colerbocker hill."

"And where is that, my child?"

"At the foot of the Knickerbocker."

"Are you, then, far from home now?"

"No, indeed, thank you, we are on the Hoggerbocker now; you can see the house from here," she said, pointing down the hill.

"Won't you let us carry you as far as your home, dearie?" persisted the kindly disposed lady.

"If you will promise to explain to auntie; and you mustn't call me 'dearie,' for only auntie and dranpa can do that," replied this quaint old-fashioned little miss.

The promise was given with assurances that no further familiarity would be indulged in, and when she was comfortably seated she glanced approvingly about her, and with easy dignity remarked, "I think this is a very fine carriage," which caused a quiet amusement for her new friends, who were too cultured to laugh, for they began to think her some princess in disguise, doubtless.

So, with interesting conversation on the way, they drove up to the old farmhouse, prepared to take all the blame for causing Mary Catherine to break her auntie's rules, but fortunately auntie

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had gone down the hill to old Nauchy's, the old lady who lived under the Hoggerbocker, and with the air of a high-bred lady little Mary Catherine bade her friends good-bye, with thanks for their kindness.

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MARY CATHERINE having been left an orphan at a very tender age, and with little or no means to help her to a start in life, the stern old aunt took it upon herself to be responsible for her bringing up. Of course every neighbor offered advice but not much else, and after Mary Catherine had gotten through the second reader, with the aid of Miss Prudence and a few threats of hanging her up on various trees, in a bag, and numerous "warmings" at the home of her aunt,—I may say literally at the hands of her aunt,—it was suggested by one of those know-it-all villagers that her aunt take her to one of those Church boarding-schools in New York City where she could be given a little "polish" and "style" even before she was beyond the lisping age. Consequently one day her aunt took her on a day boat from Catskill down the Hudson to New York.

It chanced she knew a lady at the head of such a school, and as a sort of trial trip, as it were, she took her there and left her overnight alone, while she visited a relative whom she had not seen for

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years. This was done solely to see how Mary Catherine would stand the homesick test.

As it happened, the little lady slept very soundly and well, and late the next morning, and although she had been accustomed to having help in dressing, no one appeared to assist her, and so she "dessed" herself, combed her own hair, and went downstairs to the dining-room, which was one of those sub-basement abominations so common then in New York. No one there. She wandered in search of the kitchen and the cook. The kitchen was there, but the cook wasn't, although plenty of food was lying about.

The clock struck nine, and Mary Catherine judged that she must be late, and was about to help herself, when she saw outside the area window a very ragged and very dirty old woman, who said something to her in an unknown tongue. Mary Catherine replied,—

"I don't know him; I dess he has went out."

Then the beggar indicated that something to eat was what was wanted, and as Mary Catherine's aunt had been accustomed to feeding any tramp that came her way, Mary Catherine opened the door and beckoned her in.

Having entered, our little Lady Bountiful in-

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vited her to the dining-room and hastily returned to the kitchen, piling upon a plate samples of the food in sight, hurrying back to the dining-room and placing it before the amazed lady tramp. Whereupon the tramp lady began a hasty and hearty meal, when suddenly and unexpectedly the cook came down the back stairs at the very moment the Lady Superior of the school came down the front stairs, so that each arrived at a different door at the same instant of time.

The natural instinct of each was identical, but it was indicated and expressed in somewhat different ways.

"Mither o' Moses, wud yez look ut thot!" was the cook's exclamation, with her hands raised.

"Mercy me!" was the Lady Superior's cry, with *her* hands raised.

"Git out er this!" from the cook to the tramp.

"What have you been doing, child?" from the Superior Lady to Mary Catherine.

"She was hungry, I fought, and I feeded her. *We* always do at auntie's. Don't you feed folkses what's hungry? I couldn't find nothing but cake and pie, but she eated that, an' I dess she liked it."

The Lady Superior then told the cook to give

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the tramp a loaf of bread and let her go, which she did, doubtless considering herself most fortunate.

"I ain't had no breakfas' myself yet," then ventured Mary Catherine. "May I have some milk an' some chicken?"

"Anything else?"

"Iss'm. I would like some toast, an' I don't like it burnt either, do you?"

"You'll do," very significantly replied the Superior Lady. "Cook, this time you may give her some bread and butter and an egg, but if she is late like this again, she will go without her breakfast."

Just at this moment the door-bell rang, and auntie came to get the report of Mary Catherine's first night at boarding-school.

"I don't want to stay here," said Mary Catherine. "They don't have nuffin' to eat. I want to go home."

And she *did*.

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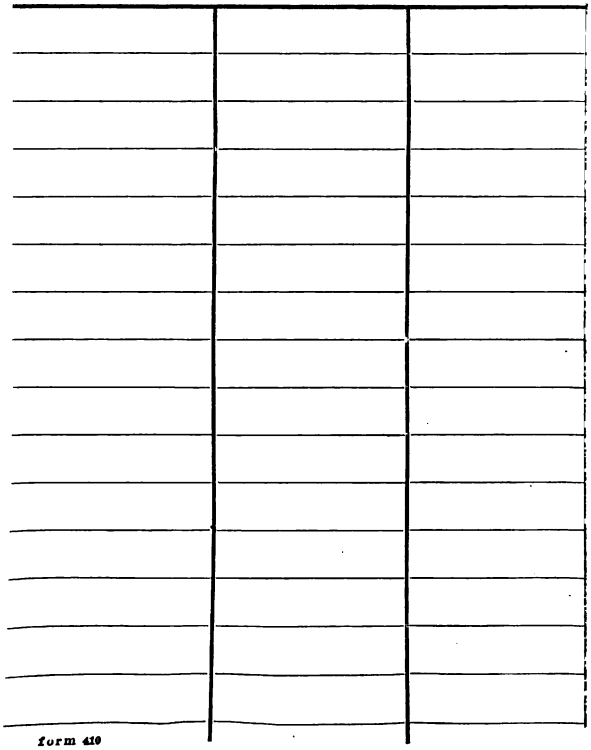

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